

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PRS-01 PA-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00  
CPR-01 SCA-01 /024 W  
-----081012Z 069549 /10  
R 080830Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2216  
USIA WASHDC  
INFO AMEMBASSYBELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0608

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PROP, SOPN, CZ  
SUBJECT: VOA CORRESPONDENT VISA APPLICATION FOR PRAGUE VISIT

REF USIA 5215

1. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT DEPARTMENT CAREFULLY ASSESSED THE PROS AND  
CONS OF A POSSIBLE VISIT HERE BY VOA CORRESPONDENT PEMSTEIN AND  
FULLY REALIZE THAT THE REQUEST FOR VISA ISSUANCE WILL LIKELY BE  
EITHER DENIED OR, IF GRANTED, LEAD TO AN UNPRODUCTIVE VISIT.  
EMBASSY SEES A VERY MINOR ADVANTAGE IN NONETHELESS MAKING THE REQUEST  
,  
IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN TO CONTRIBUTE TO USG RECORD, FOR USE  
AT BELGRADE 77, OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S POST-HELSINKI PERFORMANCE IN  
HANDLING VISA REQUESTS OF U.S. JOURNALISTS. BEFORE PROCEEDING  
WITH PEMSTEIN APPLICATION, HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT MIGHT BE  
USEFUL TO DRAW ATTENTION TO WHAT WE REGARD AS A NEW, INTENSIVE,  
CZECHOSLOVAK INITIATIVE (FOLLOWING MOSCOW'S LEAD) TO VILIFY VOA AND  
BEGIN TO CAST IT IN THE SAME MOLD WITH RFE/RL FOR UNDERMINING  
EAST-WEST DETENTE.

2. SINCE SOVIETS TOOK A POSITION AT CSCE ACCEPTING GRADUALLY  
INCREASED DISSEMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL RADIO BROADCASTING,  
PROVIDED SUCH BROADCASTING CONTRIBUTED TO DETENTE, WE WONDER WHETHER  
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THE CURRENT PROPAGANDA AGAINST VOA MIGHT EVEN SOON LEAD TO CZECHOSLOV  
AK  
RESUMPTION OF JAMMING OF VOA CZECH AND SLOVAK BORADCASTS.  
IN ANY CASE, THE PRESENT TIME APPEARS TO BE A PARTICULARLY AWKWARD  
ONE TO ATTEMPT A VISIT HERE BY ANY REPRESENTATIVE OF VOA.

3. AN EXAMPLE OF THE CURRENT CZECHOSLOVAK CAMPAIGN AGAINST VOA

IS A FEB. 18 RUDE PRAVO STORY ON A RECENT MILITARY TRIAL FOR ESPIONAGE IN WHICH THE DEFENDANT DREW A 15-YEAR SENTENCE FOR "TENDING TOWARD WESTERN CULTURE, PARTICULARLY THOSE PARTS OF IT EMPLOYED BY BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSION FOR SPREADING ANTI-COMMUNISM." ARTICLE CONTINUED, " ON INSPIRATION BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA HE FOUNDED A CLUB OF FRIENDS OF AMERICAN MUSIC, OF WHICH HE WAS CHAIRMAN AND THE ONLY MEMBER. WITH THE FICTIONAL NAMES OF TEN ALLEGED MEMBERS HE ASKED FOR U.S. REGISTRATION OF HIS CLUB IN THE HOPE OF FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES. THE REGISTRATION WAS GRANTED IN 1964 BUT THE DOLLARS FAILED TO COME. THEREFORE HE MADE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A WORKER OF A FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN THE CSSR AND THROUGH HIM WAS SENT VARIOUS FOREIGN MAGAZINES. DURING 'DISCOTHEQUES' IN HIS APARTMENT HE USED TRANSLATED SOTRIES FROM THE MAGAZINES TO SLANDER THE SOCIALIST REGIME AND OUR ALLIANCES AND TO PRAISE THE WESTERN WAY OF LIFE."

4. AS FOR PROPOSED STORY TOPICS WHICH PEMSTEIN MIGHT ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT U.S.-GOC BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, AT A LOW EBB. THERE ARE ALSO FEW, IF ANY, BRIGHT SPOTS TO POINT TO IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK ECONOMY, AND A STORY ON THE BELGRADE CSCE FOLLOWUP MEETING WOULD LIKELY BE UNPRODUCTIVE AT THIS TIME, AS GOC SPOKESMEN ARE VERY MUCH ON THE DEFENSIVE AND INCREASINGLY ANTAGONISTIC IN DISCUSSING IT.

5. IN SHORT, ATTEMPTING TO SEND A VOA CORRESPONDENT TO PRAGUE AT THIS TIME WOULD DIRECTLY CONFRONT GOC, WITH WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY HAD SEVERAL SHARP CONFRONTATIONS OVER JOURNALISTS DURING PAST FEW WEEKS, FOR WHAT WOULD APPEAR TO BE RATHER MEAGER IF NOT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE RESULTS. EMBASSY THEREFORE ADVISES  
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AGAINST VISIT AT THIS TIME, BUT SHOULD DEPARTMENT-AGENCY REAFFIRM DECISION TO PRESS PEMSTEIN VISA APPLICATION WE CAN CERTAINLY LIVE WITH IT. PLEASE ADVISE.  
BYRNE

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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